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LILLIPUT ZINNIAS.





DECEMBER, 1889.

A PLEASING story writer, in a late number of the *Cosmopolitan*, describes a morning scene in the country in late September, and then turns to the breakfast-room, inside of "one of the newest American Country Houses." He continues, "there are many of its kind by the Beverly shore, among the Berkshire hills, amid the Orange Mountains, through the valley of the Genesee. Their number increases every year as we become more and more a country-loving and a country-living people—increases along the coast from Mt. Desert to Elberon, up the Hudson and by the inland lakes."

The husband and wife who occupy the place, we are told, came, for several years, from Philadelphia to the locality. "Every autumn they came earlier and stayed later, until finally, completely won by the beauty of the country, they bought a place and built a house of their own." But it would appear, as the story advances, that the opportunity of keeping a leash of hounds and a stall of horses was an element of great weight in favor of country life. Well, men of wealth will spend large sums in amusement, and perhaps, the excitement of a few fox hunts each fall, may be better than to seek it in ways more harmful. But there are summer country homes far more modest than the one here referred to, and where, without doubt, there is as much real happiness.

The enjoyment of country life consists in being *en rapport* with nature; enjoying the sunshine and the shade, the birds and insects and animals and trees and flowers, and every living thing, the very rocks and the hills. There are instances of families of cultivated and intellectual persons who hasten away from town in early springtime, and repair to their country homes, where they remain until snow flies in late autumn. Raising plants and flowers, taking an interest in the fruit trees and vines, the care of bees and chickens, a sharp eye out for wild flowers through the season; these employments are sufficient, and books and papers and magazines of the latest issues contribute to the variety. Rowing and riding still further favor activity. The social visits of companions and acquaintances are not wanting. It is a life of freedom and intellectual action and enjoyment that town life does not afford. But there are other and many happy country homes, where the families remain under the roof-tree through all the changing months of the year. The children are acquainted with the squirrels and the birds, and bring them at their call; they grow up in sunshine and pure air, and with the freshest and best aliment develop strong, healthy bodies and active minds. From this source it is that the largest proportion is supplied of brain-workers in after life.

But permanent country residents need never lack for interest. Every season brings new objects and new scenes. What is needed in every country family is one at least who perceives nature's beauties, and whose eye and ear are ever quick to note the new phases and new sounds, and is able to interest, and, in a measure, imbue others with his own appreciation and enjoyment. But the right kinds of books and papers will afford great assistance in this training, if regularly taken into the house. What a variety of interesting objects may be noted in the woods in this first winter month.



AMELANCHIER OVALIS.

And now we wish to introduce to our readers an interesting early-blooming, small sized tree; this is *Amelanchier ovalis*. Our native *Amelanchier*, or Shadblow, is an interesting shrub of the woods and thickets, blooming in early spring long before any leaves appear. But it is a straggling bush, and when cultivated needs to be planted with others. *A. ovalis* makes a compact, oval head, and covers itself with bloom. The specimen from which this engraving is prepared was photographed when in bloom, on the 7th of May last. Nurserymen graft it on the stock of the Mountain Ash, which gives it a clean, straight stem of a few feet.

Before closing, we would notice briefly the colored plate, this month, of Pompon Zinnias. It is an interesting strain of this showy flower, and in time will be brought to considerable perfection. The flowers are shown full size.

ISMENE CALATHINA.

It is strange that a plant possessing the principal characteristics of a perfect flower—beauty and fragrance—should be so little known to the amateur world as the *Ismene calathina* seems to be, and the wonder which one feels is not diminished when the simplicity of its culture is taken into consideration. The only allusion to this plant in the *MAGAZINE*, which I remember, occurred in an article which appeared several years ago over the signature "F. U. D.," and was an account of a most decided failure—a failure, however, only in getting the bulbs to flower, as, according to the description of it by F. U. D., "it multiplied furiously."

My own experience with the *Ismene* has progressed in exactly the opposite direction; since the bulb, which came into my possession last fall, flowered in the spring, and has failed to increase at all, save in the matter of size. The treatment recommended by florists for this flower is the same as for the *Gladiolus*, *i. e.*, drying off in winter and planting out in summer. The friend who sent me the bulb wrote me that she potted the parent bulb, from which mine is an offset, and plunged the pot in the garden, last year, but it did not bloom. After reading the depressing account of it in the *MAGAZINE*, I was not sanguine about my success with this "unknown quantity," but potted it and allowed it to remain without water under the lower shelf in the bay window. Later on, when the weather had become decidedly cold, it was removed to a place but a few feet distant from a coal stove, and there it remained through the winter.

I do not recollect at what time in the spring I discovered that the bulb was putting up a strong, plump shoot, very suggestive of a concealed flower, and taking it out of the torrid atmosphere of its cupboard, it was placed in the light, water supplied, and growth proceeded in earnest. A sturdy flower-stalk soon threw off its green wrappings, and shot up to a height of two feet, or thereabout, surmounted by a pair of long buds which shortly developed into flowers, bearing some resemblance to those of an *Amaryllis*, but having far longer tubes than any *Hippeastrum* which I have ever seen. In fact, I should think that the flowers

when perfect must have measured from six to nine (I only write from memory, so cannot give accurate dimension) inches from the base of the slender tube of the corolla or perianth to the tips of the recurved sepals, and perhaps six inches across the top of the expanded blossom.

The flower is white, tinted with green, and its fragrance is almost identical with that of the Night-blooming *Phyllocactus* and *Imantophyllum*, though much more powerful than that of the latter, as its perfume is noticeable at quite a distance from the plant.

Being careless in my observations of the *Ismene* from a botanical standpoint, I am unable to say whether the flower has both calyx and corolla or only a perianth with dissimilar divisions. If the latter be the case, the five outer divisions give the blossoms the appearance of having a white calyx extending far beyond a corolla, the lobes of which are fringed and so deeply indented as to make them nearly or quite obcordate and rendering the flower very peculiar and striking, indeed.

Learning that the friend from whom I obtained the *Ismene* changed her tactics and bedded out the "original" bulb, this season, and that it flowered under this regime, I infer that the plant is both suited for house culture and for growing in the garden, like the *Gladiolus*. The main point to be observed in case it is wanted for early flowering in the house, being that of keeping the bulb in a dry, warm place through the winter. Since receiving in a letter (from a subscriber to the *MAGAZINE*) a flower of perhaps less than one-fourth the size of the blossoms grown on my plant, I have been wondering—as I think the small flower was from a plant grown in the open ground—whether house culture does not tend to develop the possibilities of the *Ismene calathina* more than the other method; but having had no experience myself with this plant under the out door system, I am unable to decide. As the *Ismene* is really a very inexpensive plant it is to be hoped that it will become well known to those who are fond of flowers, as it doubtless will when its merits are understood.

MRS. LUNEY, *Hoosic, N. Y.*

GARDEN SPOILS FROM THE AUTUMN WOODS.

"The harvest of a quiet eye" in the autumn woods may contribute much beauty to the flower garden, if the owner of the eye have but willing hands, a trowel and a basket. Follow the winding bank of some little brook across meadow lots and down through the woods, and it will lead you surely and show you gladly where these autumn treasures are, plashing and tinkling along softly, all the while at your feet, as if to reassure and inspire you with confidence; glad to be on a holiday ramble with you, and to have such an appreciative companion, its soft, merry rhythm of conversation never ceases, for it is determined you shall not grow lonely, but enjoy yourself and come again. With such a guide there is no danger of getting lost, for no matter how deep you go into the woods, it is always there, like a silver thread, to lead you back out of the labyrinth, and you must often have noticed that wild flowers are always more plentiful and beautiful along the banks of woodland streams.

Before leaving the meadow, in some damp nook, you will suddenly come upon a great, glowing spike of scarlet berries—"berry nubbins," the children call them—and I can think of nothing that the closely and regularly set berries of the Indian Turnip seed spike resembles in shape as much as a dwarfed ear of corn. Jack-in-the-Pulpit, when in bloom, was a very handsome fellow, with his long surplice-spathe of dark purplish-brown, striped with yellow, and you might trace more easily then his kinship with the Calla; but the blossom could not compare in beauty with this gleaming spike of scarlet seed-vessels. Dig it up by the root and carry it with you, for the berries remain perfect for more than two months, and the large, dark green, ovate, three-parted leaves are very handsome. Planted in your rockery on the north side of the house, you will find it will flourish finely.

All along the banks of the stream, like torches, to light you on your way, gleam the tall spikes of the Cardinal Flower, than which there was never a flower more brilliant and showy, yet having never the slightest suggestion of coarseness. The deep, dark, rich coloring of the petals gives them a velvety look, and

I have heard some really sensitive, unaffected people fairly scream with delight on first beholding this flower. It transplants quite readily into any spot that is cool and somewhat shaded, and blooms quite surely if given a reasonable amount of water. This species of *Lobelia*, *L. cardinalis*, is our handsomest one, although some of the blue *Lobelias* are very pretty.

Take up, also, a clump of the Maiden-hair Fern, growing close beside it, and that Partridge Berry trailing over the gray rocks below, with a scarlet berry at the tip of every runner. Its small, round, dark green leaves with white mid-rib, make it a very pretty, cunning little vine, even if there were no berries; and did you ever see the flowers? I never did until last spring, when I found some growing at the foot of an old Beech by the brookside. They are wee, delicate, white blossoms with a tubular corolla about a quarter of an inch long, four cleft and covered with soft, fine, velvety hairs. Borne in the axils of the leaves at the extremity of the runners, they form very pretty little clusters.

The Goldenrod waves its yellow plumes to you from every fence corner, and since it is such a favored candidate for national honor it would be well to domesticate it. It is said to be quite amenable to culture, and here is a written description that I hope, next autumn, to ratify: "One of the most highly prized occupants of my garden is a Goldenrod obtained in a corner of an old pasture. I took it up, one day in spring, some years ago, remembering what a grand show it had made in the autumn, and brought it home with me, thinking it deserved a spot where its beauty could be seen and enjoyed by more lovers of flowers than would be likely to see it in its pasture home. It bore the change nicely, and in autumn rewarded me with a great crop of magnificent flowers. It was greatly admired by those who would not have given it a second look if they had seen it growing in the pasture. That autumn when I gave my borders their usual winter covering of old manure, I dug some of it in about its roots, and next spring it sent up many stout stems, and soon the clump was so large that I could not reach around it

with both arms. When it came into bloom the sight was grand. The outer branches bent beneath the weight of their yellow plumes, and the clump was like an enormous cushion of gold, being completely covered with flowers. For weeks it was the attraction of the yard, and I was besieged with applications for roots of it. When told it was simply the Goldenrod of the fields given such cultivation as other flowers how people looked at me incredulously.* I do not see why this Goldenrod, with much beauty and grace to recommend it, should not, as a tall, yellow flower, take the place of the Sunflower in our gardens, which, strenuous as have been my efforts to admire it, only seems to me heavy and awkward and hideous.

As the brook leads you on deeper into the woods, you will find upon rocky hill-sides the *Eupatorium arborea*, just going out of bloom, and *E. ageratoides* in full beauty. The latter has exquisite, feathery clusters of white flowers that are invaluable for bouquet making, as one who has cultivated it soon finds. Mingle it now

with your Cardinal Flowers, Asters and Goldenrods, and see what an air of grace and elegance it lends them.

Springing up from a bed of decaying leaves, in some damp, sheltered spot, if you look closely, you will find the Indian Pipe, or *Monotropa*, which somebody has immortalized as "Death in the Woods." It is known in some localities as Corpse Plant, and you shiver as you touch its cold, waxen-white leaf and stem with the curving "Pipe" at the end—a perfectly formed flower, exquisite in shape and moulding. It seldom grows to a greater height than six or eight inches, and has a quick, Mushroom growth. Thrust your trowel in deep beneath a clump of them, and take up a great flake of the leaf-mold. Carry them carefully home in your basket, and placed in a cool, dark place, you will find that they will keep white and perfect for a month or more, and be a source of great wonder and admiration to all those to whom they are new. But do not imagine that they will grow for you, or come up the next year, for only damp, dark, lonely, forest nooks are haunted by this pale little ghost of the woods. L. GREENLEE.

* *Peninsula Home Journal*.

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.

The importance of a good vegetable garden to the farmer's family can hardly be over-estimated. And yet, the ordinary farmer seems inclined to ignore its benefits and suffers it to become a burden to him instead of a pleasure, as it would be considered, if properly appreciated. He sees the profit in wheat and corn, because he sells the product of these cereals, and the money he gets for them is something tangible. But the products of the garden are not sold, therefore he sees no money coming in from it, and he gets into the habit of thinking that time and labor given to it are about the same as thrown away or wasted. And, too, a garden to a man who spends most of his time in great fields of corn and wheat and hay during the spring and summer, seems a very little, circumscribed affair—something hardly worth "bothering" with—too insignificant to be given much attention, in fact. Consequently the vegetable garden is pretty sure to be neglected by the

head of the family, unless the "head" happens to be a woman. If most farmers' wives had the requisite amount of time and strength to attend to the garden as it ought to be attended to, I know very well that we would see fewer patches of weeds dignified by the name of garden, from which a few inferior vegetables are taken during the season. A housekeeper appreciates the advantages of a well stocked garden to draw from as occasion requires. The "men folks" appreciate the vegetables which the woman of the family sets before them at meal time, but the despised garden fails to get the credit it deserves, for all that. Many men seem to think that vegetables are, or ought to be, spontaneous products. There ought to be plenty of them without a man's being obliged to do anything to secure them. A garden ought to plant and take care of itself. But it so happens that gardens "are not made in that way," and the man who is not willing to give proper atten-

tion to a garden can not expect to have one that is worthy the name. "He who soweth shall not reap," is just as true to-day as when it was first said.

If the farmer was obliged to buy the vegetables used in his family through the year, he would begin to understand how much money there is in a good garden. If he could not afford to buy them, he would begin to appreciate them as he does not when he has even a limited supply, and that of inferior quality. Take that away entirely, and he would see what a great benefit is derived from a poor garden. Let him keep an account of the money paid out, if he purchases, and at the end of the year he understands, as never before, the amount of good living which the garden supplies, and he would conclude that there is more money in the garden than he had thought.

I would urge every farmer to have a

garden, and a good one, for, while a poor one is better than none at all, a good one is so much better that one ought never to be satisfied with anything else. Let him make up his mind to work it at least as well as he does other portions of his farm, and he will find, if he carries out this resolution, and keeps an account of the results, that there is no other portion of the farm which furnishes so much of the family's living, therefore none that "pays" so well. That this is the fact, every one who has a good garden will tell you. It is also a fact that those who have the best gardens appreciate them most. Poor gardens are only to be tolerated on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no loaf at all." Not only does a good garden represent greater quantity, but superior quality, for fine vegetables cannot be grown in a garden not properly cared for.

EBEN E. REXFORD.

CHRISTMAS AND LENTEN ROSES.

In looking over the bound volumes of the MAGAZINE I find no mention of these Roses, excepting a brief note in the number for August, 1888, respecting my *Helleborus niger* which had budded in September the previous year, and at the time of writing I expressed the hope that it would continue to bloom until the holidays. It did so, and last winter it blossomed very finely. It is a very unusual thing for it to bud before December, I believe. I am surprised that no more is written about this flower; indeed, I do not remember seeing any article respecting it aside from my own brief notes, now and then. In England it is thought highly of, judging from the frequent references to it in the *London Garden*. It is rarely catalogued in this country, and I know of only one florist who has a list of both the Christmas and the Lenten Roses. It is to call attention to this class of hardy perennials that I write this article.

Helleborus niger angustifolius is the variety best known as the Christmas Rose, because it comes into bloom about that time. The foliage is dark evergreen, lacinated, and very pretty. The large, white flowers are borne on long stems, and when cut will keep a long time in water.

Helleborus altifolius is quite as much a Christmas Rose as the other, and is highly prized by the English. It comes into bloom a few weeks earlier, but continues for a long time. I read in the *London Garden*, a few years ago, that in the Hale Nursery, at Tottenham, there were no less than from two to three thousand plants of this handsome Christmas Rose in bloom at one time. The writer says: "It is without doubt the finest of all the varieties of *H. niger*, and habitually flowers a few weeks before Christmas. This variety is also known under the name of *H. niger maximus*, but whether it be a distinct species or a mere variety of *H. major*, is of little moment to cultivators, so long as they know that it is a distinct and handsome plant, invaluable in winter." These plants will bud and bloom in spite of frost and snow in the open ground. As we cannot, however, enjoy them very well thus situated, we pot them in the autumn and keep them in a cool room.

THE LENTEN ROSES.—These are *Hel-*
lebores which are so called because they come into bloom at Lent. There are quite a variety of colors, a few of which I will specify. *Albin Otto* is pure white dotted with red. *F. C. Heinmann*, large,

deep purple flower, imbricated. Frau Irene Heinmann, rose-purple, veined and dotted with rich carmine. Hofgart Hartweg, rose-purple, tinged with yellow to-

ward the tips of the petals and spotted with carmine. Cammery Benarry, white, with purple spots.

MARY D. WELLCOME.

A BEGINNER IN FRUIT-GROWING.

NUMBER 2.

After the Strawberries have been mulched, in December, with two or three inches of clean straw, and cuttings and scions of every desirable variety secured, there is little that the fruit-grower can do in the direct line of his business during the winter months, save to make plans for the coming summer. I have re-

Few realize the advantage of working land in long rows, plowing it in narrow strips as wanted. I begun by following the usual custom of planting in little blocks, adapted to the quantity planted, in spite of the fact that my ground was two hundred and ten rods long and only thirty rods wide, a fact that in itself should have directed me toward a better way. As an illustration, I, one year, planted forty rows of Tomatoes, each four and one-half rods long, on land that could and should have been worked ninety rods. They would have just filled two long rows, and the time spent just in turning at the ends of the short rows would have more than sufficed to have cultivated the long rows. The small piece of about one-fourth of an acre, owing to its form, four and one-half by ten rods, took about half a day to plow, while the long strip could have been plowed by going eight times along, with seven turnings at the ends, and could have been done in less than two hours. Two trips back and forth would have harrowed the narrow strip, while the other piece was all tramped hard at the corners and sides, with so much turning, in plowing and fitting.

The Tomatoes were bounded on one side of the narrow way by Strawberries in bearing, and on the other by Sweet Corn, with drill rows running at right angles, so the turning was necessarily done on the crop. The only mitigating circumstances were that I could cultivate cross-ways, thus saving some hand hoeing, but I dreaded the short work so much, and it injured so much in turning that the cultivating was, in a measure, neglected; but little was gained in that direction.

The simplest way of laying out grounds where the ground is in a parallelogram, and not very rolling, is to bisect it the long way with a wagon path, and work it in long parallel strips. Every twenty rods cross-ways should be left to carry out berries and vegetables, and if the

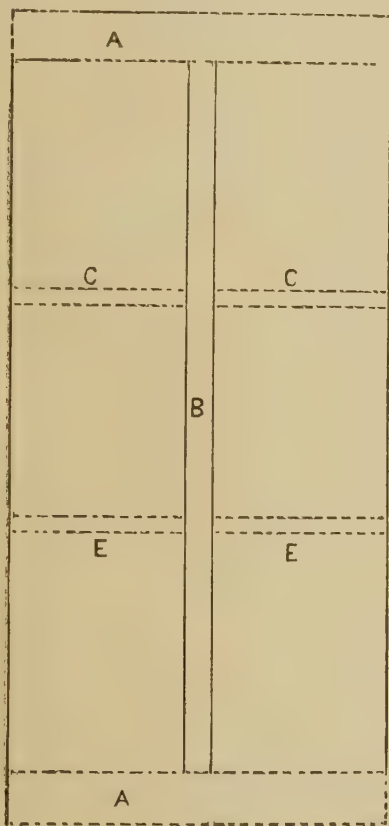


FIG. 1.

cently seen an article, by a well known writer, making light of winter plans, and claiming that a day or two is time enough to devote to the laying out of a summer's work. How it may be with others I know not, but in my own case, had I been able to obtain some intelligent advice in regard to laying out my place and kindred matters, I would have saved many dollars that have been since thrown away in time consumed in plowing little patches and turning on short rows.

ground is more than twenty rods wide, ten rods on each side the wagon way, additional drives will be needed.

The cross-paths need not be more than six feet wide, and are not intended to be skipped by the plow and cultivator, but may be cultivated in the direction of their length, or at right angles to the crops. This will keep them clear of weeds and level, so a hand cart can be trundled along these little alleys.

Figure 1 illustrates what I mean. It is a parallelogram with broad headlands

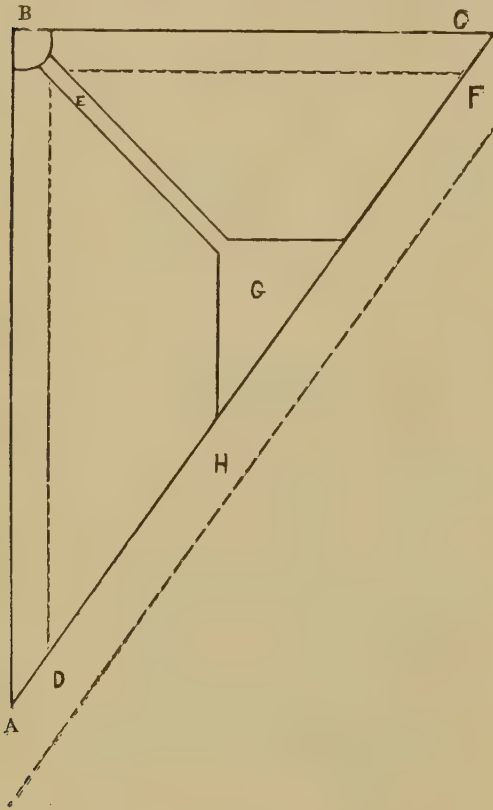


FIG. 2.

(30 feet wide), kept in grass at either end, shown by the spaces in dotted lines *A, A*. All crops are to be planted the full length from *A* to *A*, leaving out one or more plants at the cross-alleys, *C, C, E, E*.

If the distance from *A* to *C* is twenty rods, and on either side of the drive, *B*, ten rods, then the longest distance any thing will need to be carried is twenty rods, unless it is necessary to walk farther to gather a basket full. Of course, in gathering crops, like Potatoes, in which the ground is cleaned up, wagons can be driven lengthways of the rows, loading toward home, and in winter time manure may be distributed the same way.

Where land is gore-shaped, or irregular, other methods must be adopted.

Figure 2 shows a triangular piece of ground, *A, B, C*, lying along the diagonal road, *H*. If cut up into square lots, after the manner of most farms, there would be short rows and triangular fields in such as bordered the highway, making no end of trouble and short turning. A triangular field near where I live has been planted in ensilage corn three years in succession, in rows across the narrow way and in the acute angle, similar to *A*, in figure 2. The rows become so short that a cultivator cannot be

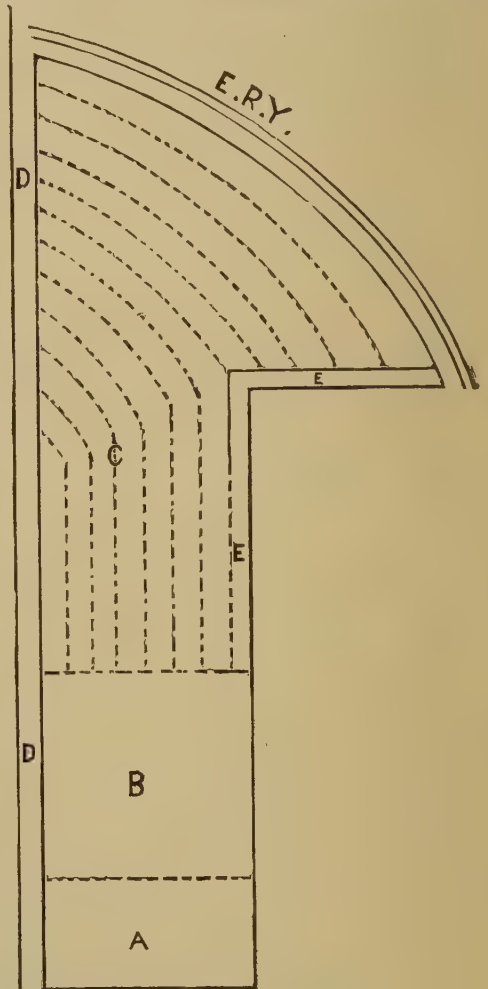


FIG. 3.

worked. If the rows ran the other way there would be the same trouble at *c*.

In this figure the buildings are supposed to be located at *G*, and the land worked in drills running from *D* to *E*, and from *E* to *F*, the narrow alley being left to drive in, a turning spot being left at the corner. In fact, a continuous crop could be

put in on two sides of the place by simply turning half way at *e* in cultivating. I am gradually getting my own farm into shape, a part of which is shown in figure 3, the direction of berry rows being shown by dotted lines; *A* is the residence grounds, *B* orchard and pasture, *C* ground devoted to berries in connection with young orchards on a portion. The rows along the railroad, this year, in Corn, and

next year to be put in Raspberries and Blackberries, are ninety rods long. *D*, *D* is a laneway skirting the south side, and *E*, *E* is a narrow drain on the north side, serving as a headland to the curved rows. When all is planted a row will be left out from the angle in *E*, *E*, running to the south lane, to be intersected by two or three cross alleys running to the railroad.

L. B. PIERCE.

OUR NATIVE TREE FRUITS.

It has been a subject for regret that the possession of the tree fruits of Europe has caused such an almost entire neglect of our native species and varieties. All cultivated fruits of the old countries were unquestionably derived from the wild forms, and there cannot be a doubt that our wild Plums, Apples and Cherries, our Persimmons, Pawpaw and Mulberries are capable of being equally ennobled by culture and selection.

The work ought to be begun by careful selection. There are very great differences in the wild forms of each species, and it is desirable in attempting their ennoblement to first select those which already possess the most desirable qualities. Careful search should be made in all favorable localities for these choice forms. It is well known that, as regards the Grape, with all our numerous new seedlings, we have not as yet surpassed a few wildings from the thicket, such as the Catawba, the Delaware and the Isabella. The discovery of such excellent varieties in the wild state was a strong encouragement to the propagation of seedlings; yet it is hardly probable that the American Grape would have acquired such remarkable development had it not been for the general failure of all foreign species in the climate of our Atlantic slope and the Mississippi valley.

And now, since cultivation on this continent has been pushed so far northward that European tree fruits fail to endure the cold of American winters, we meet, as regards these, with a difficulty analogous to that which arrested the culture of the foreign Grape. Our common European Plums and Cherries fail in hardiness everywhere in America north of the 45th parallel. The native species are much more resistant against cold, and

are found growing wild far beyond the regions yet being opened to settlement. In order to suitably adjust ourselves to the situation we ought, therefore, at once to institute a careful search among these wild fruits for the best forms, in order to make as favorable a start as possible.

Every workman, and all the boys on our farms are aware of the existence of these superior forms, but very few ever think of transplanting them—much less of growing seedlings from them—and, of course, still fewer know anything of what could be done by high culture, crossing and hybridization. It seems to me, therefore, that a burden rests upon the horticulturists of our national experiment stations to seek out the best forms of all our native fruits, and labor for their development in all possible ways, with as much speed as possible.

Take our Cherries to begin with. We have, first, the shrubby Choke Cherry, which unquestionably might become the parent of an improved dwarf iron-clad fruit, either directly developed from the best among the wildings, or aided by crossings with foreign species. The dwarf Black Hills Cherry, probably the largest of our natives, would, perhaps, cross well with the Choke Cherry. Among the innumerable wild "Bird Cherries," even in the wild state, selections could easily be made of trees producing very large and good fruit, with which to make an advantageous start, while the Black Cherry might be made the foundation for another race similar to the foreign Heart Cherries.

When we come to the Plums, it is seen at once that nature has laid a broad foundation for us to build upon in our variant native species—east, west and south—selections from which are already widely

cultivated. It is easy to believe that from these can be educed fruit far superior to and widely different from anything yet known. It would not be surprising to see Plums from this stock reaching eventually the size and quality of the Apricot, with a vigor of tree far beyond that of any foreign stone fruit. With this abundant material, and all the acquired skill of modern science, and with these natives and all their relatives from other continents to work with, our skilled horticulturists ought to produce remarkable re-

sults within a comparatively brief time. When we see how much was achieved by ROGERS, in Grapes, who can fail to have the courage to go on in what would seem an easy and honorable path of beneficent progress? Most of our station staffs have been chosen from amongst the young and ambitious students of natural science. This field of our native fruits should be a most inviting one to them, at least, who devote themselves to botany and horticulture.

T. H. HOSKINS, M. D., *Orleans Co., Vt.*

PREMIUMS AT STATE FAIRS.

As many of our State Agricultural Societies hold their annual meetings in January, to review the work of the past year, select officers and make plans for the future, would this not be a good time to ask their executive officers why it is the exhibitions of fruits, flowers and plants are so small, while the exhibitions of live stock is always large? It might puzzle some of these gentlemen to answer this question, and to assist them I will quote from a Premium List of a State Agricultural Society that is about to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary :

Shorthorn Bull, three years old	\$50 00
Second Prize	25 00
Cow, four years old	40 00
Second Prize	20 00
Heifer, three years old	40 00
Second Prize	20 00

And at about this rate the premiums average through the list of cattle, horses, &c. Now turn to the plants, flowers and selections, the very highest :

Best General Collection of Cut Flowers . . .	\$20 00
Second	10 00
Best Collection of Gladioli	5 00
Second	3 00
Best Collection of Greenhouse and Stove Plants	30 00
Second	20 00
Third	10 00
Best Group of Palms	10 00
Second	5 00
Best Display of Floral Designs	25 00
Second	15 00

The expense of taking plants, flowers, &c., to a Fair is fully as much, if not

more, than that of taking a horse or cow, as they must be shipped by express, which is very expensive. Flowers are worthless at the close of the exhibition, and generally it takes months of care to get the plants back into as good condition as when they left the greenhouse. While the live stock are quite as good as when they left home, and often more valuable on account of the "blue ribbon" (first prize). Many times, trades and sales are made right on the spot, which not only pay their expenses but thus give a handsome profit.

The premiums offered by the Society mentioned are the most liberal of any I have seen, but even these are much too small, as there are very few florists who will cut fifty dollars' worth of flowers and make them up into floral designs, paying heavy express charges, for the possibilities of taking a fifteen or twenty dollar premium.

Would it not be well for our executive officers to think over these facts, and offer such premiums as would induce the florists to make exhibitions that would be great attractions? H. F.

[Good, we fully agree with the writer. The Agricultural Society alluded to in the above is one of, if not the best in this respect. Many of the Fairs offer \$25.00 for a horse or cow and fifty cents for a show of plants or flowers. It would be well for the Florists' societies and clubs to try and prevail on the officers of the Fairs to bring about a change in this respect. —V.]



FOREIGN NOTES.

THE CACTUS DAHLIA.

One hundred years have elapsed since the Dahlia was first introduced to England, and great changes in the flower have taken place within that time. The event was worthily celebrated by a beautiful and instructive exhibition at the Crystal Palace, when those interested in the flower could judge of the progress made during the century. All the classes of Dahlia were there, the show types, that have always held their own, the Pompon, the single, and the Cactus varieties. Of this throng none is more popular or promises to develop more rapidly than the Cactus Dahlia. Its strange character, freedom, distinctness and effectiveness in the garden are sufficient to account for this decided favor. Neither the show, single, nor Pompon varieties are like it; it has a striking individuality, and bears most graceful flowers that may be used when cut without lumpy effects. The history of the Cactus Dahlia is romantic. Mr. J. T. VAN DER BERG, of Juxphaar, near Utrecht, in the year 1872, received a box of flower seeds and roots from Mexico, and by reason of delays on the journey the contents were for the most part rotten, and those alive in but poor condition. All the seeds that had any life were sown, and amongst the seedling plants was a small tuber, which proved to be the Cactus Dahlia, at that time unnamed. As it was then winter, cuttings alone were taken; these with care made good plants, so that in the spring of 1873 there was a stock. In the following June plants were put out in the open ground, and the rich scarlet, strangely shaped flowers filled every one who saw them with astonishment. They were unlike those of the Dahlia of that day, and foreboded a great future for the new type. A leading French firm purchased the stock in the year 1874, and from thence it went to Messrs. ANT. ROOZEN AND SON, the great Dutch nurserymen. Its introduction to England occurred at this time, as Mr. W. H. CULLINGFORD, of Phillimore Gardens, Kensington, purchased it from Messrs. ANT.

ROOZEN, but it was not for a year or two that it appeared at an English exhibition. Mr. CULLINGFORD gave plants to Mr. CANNELL, and by him the first flowers were exhibited at South Kensington, on the 3d of September, 1880. Their peculiar character at once suggested the name "Cactus" Dahlia, which has been retained for the race generally, though they are more commonly known as "decorative." Juarezi is derived from JUAREZ, a President of Mexico, after whom the plant was named.

With such a distinctive flower to work upon, the hybridists soon commenced to raise new varieties, which have come to the perfection we see them in at the present day. Considering only nine years have elapsed, great things have been accomplished; but each year sees the introduction of new varieties that extend the range of coloring, and give us those soft and charming tints which are to be found in the showy single and Pompon classes. The type itself, Juarezi, still retains a firm place in public favor. It is the "Paragon" of the Cactus race, and, like that beautiful single Dahlia, seems to be more grown each year, in spite of the addition of many new varieties. Juarezi has one bad trait, and that is its habit of smothering the flowers beneath a canopy of leafage, so as to hide them from view. This fault has been rectified in the newer introductions, which throw the flowers well above the leaves, and give a good length of stem to cut. Juarezi is the only flower that has the true pointed petal, and already we are beginning to lose that free, graceful, and unique form, the most recent varieties showing a flat, broad petal, which makes a good "show" bloom without, unfortunately, much of the true Cactus character in it. This should be carefully guarded against. The Cactus character should not be lost, but retained in its fullness as far as possible so as to keep the race distinct and unique. There is a wide field for the enterprise of the hybridist. A smaller flowered race, such as might be obtained by infusing the Pompon blood into the Cactus class,

would possibly give good results. The tendency is to force the flowers to their utmost limit of size. Nothing is gained by it, as their characteristic points are lost by this unnatural treatment, and we gain only a severe formality, which should be the very thing to avoid.

The following are a few of the best varieties :

Beauty of Brentwood.—This is of splendid Cactus character, with less of the show style in it than many. The flowers are purple, shaded with a pellucid magenta tint.

Charming Bride.—An American variety and a charming flower, white, richly suffused and tipped with pink.

Empress of India.—Without doubt the finest variety among the maroon-colored flowers. It is of bold handsome form and very free.

Henry Patrick.—A lovely pure white flower now much grown.

Lady M. Marsham.—The flowers of this are like those of Juarezi in expression, and the color is an unusually distinct salmon shade.

William Darville.—This throws its flowers well above the leaves; the color is bright purple, richly shaded with magenta. It is exceptionally free and handsome.

William Rayner.—A good salmon-buff colored flower.

William Pearce.—One of the best of yellow varieties.

Zulu.—This is valuable for the rich purple-maroon color of the flowers; they are almost black. The growth of the plant is not so free and handsome as that of some.

A. W. Tait.—A beautiful pure white variety that should be in every well formed collection.

Juarezi is still one of the best.

Mrs. Hawkins.—A distinct and beautiful flower of good Cactus expression, full and handsome; the color is rich sulphur, which is faintly suffused with a pinkish shade at the tips of the pointed petals.

Panthea.—A brilliant scarlet flower of true Cactus form. It has been well exhibited this season.

Honorina.—This yellow-flowered variety has been exhibited this season; the color is decided and the form of the flower good.

C., in *The Garden*.

TREE FERNS.

These noble Ferns are great favorites with all lovers of beautiful plants, and the increasing demand for them is clearly proved by the vast quantities of them which are annually imported by our leading nurserymen, and which as soon as established find a ready sale. New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania are their principal resorts; and the fact that these plants thrive to perfection in ordinary greenhouses or conservatories enables amateurs whose means do not allow them to indulge in the luxury of a plant-stove to enjoy these gems among Ferns. Besides those from temperate climes, however, we have a goodly number of species from tropical countries. In constructing a house to grow Tree Ferns in, I strongly advise its being built below the ordinary ground level. If no natural ravine or dell exists in the garden in which to construct a house, then make one, for there is no real necessity for a fern house to have high glass sides, and under all circumstances, where a house is to be constructed for the growth of Tree Ferns, I would have the bottom several feet at least below the surface. By this means, height is obtained at little expense, and thus the more vigorous and quick growing kinds will not rapidly outgrow the accommodation. By this means, too, a splendid opportunity is afforded for forming elevated view points, from which a sight may be obtained of the tops of the plants, without which half their beauty is lost. In addition to these advantages, moreover, houses constructed in this way may be heated at a trifling cost compared with structures wholly above ground, because they do not present much surface to the external atmosphere, and during the hot dry summer months a more equable and genial atmosphere can be maintained. Of course, such structures as these are intended for Ferns only, and not flowering plants.

In ordinary greenhouses Tree Ferns in pots form splendid ornaments, and they will accommodate themselves to such houses, where, from want of sunlight and other causes, any other class of plants would not only do badly, but perhaps refuse to drag out even a miserable existence, so that they specially recommend themselves to any one having a glasshouse with an unfavorable aspect. To amateurs

in particular, I would say, avoid overpotting Tree Ferns. The secret of their being kept in good health in small pots lies in a little extra supply of water, and also some weak liquid manure occasion-

whorl, the kind of development by which their stems are built up. As a rule, those from temperate regions produce the greatest number of fronds in a single whorl, and consequently have the stout-



THE TASMANIAN TREE FERN—*DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA*.

ally. Treated thus they have a much better appearance than in the monstrous tubs and pots in which they are so frequently seen in our plant houses. Tree Ferns vary much both in the height and diameter of their stems, such variation being caused by the greater or less number of fronds which go to form a spiral

est stems and are slowest in growth. The tropical kinds have usually slender stems, which are more or less armed with sharp spines and grow up somewhat quickly. In potting use good peat and loam in about equal proportions, adding a quantity of sharp sand, and making the drainage perfect. Tree Ferns like an

abundant supply of moisture in the air, and the stems should be frequently syringed to encourage the development of stem roots, which add so much to the health and vigor of the plants. One of the best known and one of the noblest of the greenhouse kinds of Tree Ferns is the one forming the subject of the annexed illustration—the Tasmanian Tree Fern.

W., in *London Garden*.

ROOT-PRUNING FRUIT TREES.

Root-pruning acts like magic sometimes in bringing barren trees into a bearing state, especially when unfruitfulness is brought about by undue luxuriance. When trees are making very strong shoots they are found on examination to be making roots in proportion, and so long as this goes on fruit prospects are very much jeopardized. It is the small fibrous roots which command the formation of fruit spurs, and in some soils there is difficulty in maintaining a fruitful condition. In gardens where the surface is light and open, with a clayey subsoil, there is great tendency for the roots to go deep in search of moisture, especially if the aspect is at all open and windy. With soils of this description mulching is of considerable value, of no matter what kind so long as it creates and maintains moisture.

Old and exhausted trees may be invigorated by digging a trench down as deep as roots are found, fresh soil being added, with which is incorporated some mortar refuse or lime and bones. It is not advisable to add any animal manure, as this is better applied in a liquid state, but any accumulation of burnt or decayed garden refuse may be given with advantage in moderate quantities if well mixed with the soil. All roots that are severed should be cut smooth with a sharp knife, as affording assistance in encouraging a quick and perfect callus from which fibry roots eventually issue.

With large trees root-pruning should not be completed the first year, but a half circle, as it were, dug round at one time, the remaining half until another subsequent season. It is important that when the work is in hand the ball of roots should be undermined quite up to the trunk or main stem, as large tap-roots frequently take a direct downward course, and if these are not severed the work done

will not have the desired effect. The space beneath the tree requires that the soil should be well trodden in, otherwise there is danger of its shrinking, which if the tree was unable to sink with it would leave a cavity and seriously interfere with root formation. Should the soil be at all dry it must, as the filling proceeds, be well watered, this serving to fill up crevices more effectually and quickly than when it is allowed to sink naturally. Moreover, it tends to sustain the tree under its surgical treatment. It is a very good plan when trees are operated on at the roots that the necessary pruning be done at the same time, so that the demands on the roots may be correspondingly decreased, and there is also less surface open to the wind forces.

W. S., in *Journal of Horticulture*.

NOVEL WAY OF STRIKING ROSES.

Recently I was conversing with a policeman who is a Rose enthusiast, and he told me he had strong bushes of some of the best Hybrid Perpetuals upon their own roots that he had rooted himself in a way quite new to me. Having obtained a suitable shoot or several of them, they were placed in an ordinary bottle which contained some water, and this bottle was hung upon the wall of the house in a sunny position and there left, water being supplied to make up the deficiency caused by evaporation. In this water, which often becomes very warm from the heat of the sun, the cuttings remained, and after a short period they callused, when they were taken out and dibbled into pots in the ordinary way, the formation of the roots soon taking place. The above plan was claimed as expeditious, as the cuttings callused much sooner in water than they did in the soil. It is known that many things root readily in water, and Oleanders are frequently propagated in that way, whilst some *Sedum* spectabile that I have lately had in a cut state had rooted freely long before the flowers faded. With the Roses, if the cutting is once nicely callused, success is almost a certainty, and if this needed state can be brought about by immersion of the base in water, we then have a simple and valuable aid to Rose propagation, because it is much easier to preserve alive a cutting placed in water than it is one in the soil during its early stage. A. H., in *Garden*.

PLEASANT GOSSIP.

PARIS REVERIES.

Wandering along the banks of the Seine, gazing lovingly, as one must, at Notre Dame church, whose architecture is unsurpassed in beauty, being of the pure gothic, I stopped to watch the devotional worshippers who, at an early hour, were coming and going, jostling each

being of better quality than any Paris market could produce.

The dress may be interesting to readers, as artists tell me it is authentic and worn by all the peasants in that section of Brittany. Bonnet and sabots, apron and robe were of the coarsest manufacture.

How chatty and communicative are the French peasants, and each have a tale to tell, believing it is unique, and pour out in sympathetic innocence their woes and add to the joys and blessings which may amount only to the providential gift of a calf or pig. And what a love of country they all have. There is no desire to wander and "strange countries see." God has given all that was desirable to France, and now to keep it from Germany, their greatest "*souci*." It does not take much logic to convince a good American that they are correct, for fruit is of a better quality, flowers may not be more sweet in perfume, but they are larger and more perfect in form. Vegetables have a finer flavor, and the mode of arranging tempts the eye. Money seems to be a small compensation for the gratification one receives in knowing the fruits, flowers and vegetables are the best, and have been brought to such high state of perfection through patient care.

Strangers come from all parts of the world to the great Exposition. Englishmen express no admiration, but drink in pleasure, while with their rough walking sticks and umbrellas they poke their neighbors, forgetting the "beg pardon;" it is left across the Channel, besides it would never be understood in France, where one speaks French, and desires to know no other language. Scotchmen, with blustering honesty, blurt out, "powerfu' gude."

Irishmen boil over with expansive admiration of the little French people who are so gifted, and who are not afraid to fight, and always "at home" in a battle.

Germans observe silently and unobtrusively, mentally calculating the advantages they may have in the future, for the



A BRITTANY PEASANT.

other, and I also noted that the peasants were not forgetful of some floral offering to their patron saint. In haste, I sketched the pure type of a Brittany Peasant, whose anxious face attracted me. I learned she was from Gouézac, and was visiting Paris for the first time, and had wended her way to the church she loved so well, and about which she had heard such wonderful stories. The Onions she had in her hand were a gift to the old *curé*, or priest, and she had brought them from her farm, in rustic simplicity, as

desire to possess Paris and France lurks in the secret corner of every true German's heart.

Russians are at home in Paris, and speak the language as if it were their own mother-tongue. What language do they not master?

John Chinaman is here and pockets his cue, for one rarely sees it, or, perhaps, curls it up in the top of his hat, for he does not change his Oriental dress. Japanese gentlemen advance to Parisian customs and don the latest modes, but look ill at ease.

Americans from every section of the United States are here, and for them Paris is paradise. EDISON is the hero of the hour, the living one, COLUMBUS the dead one. The American colony are arranging for the *fête* of the fourth centenary of the discovery of America by the Genoese mariner; yet I recall, as a memory of sad and pleasant recollections bursts upon me of life in Colon or Aspinwall, that the beautiful statue of COLUMBUS, made in Italy, presented by the Empress EUGENIE to America, and that was to be placed at Colon, supposed to be the first place where he landed, for nearly a year laid upon the sand, and no one seemed to care for the memory of COLUMBUS, or to understand the generosity of the giver. The late, good Captain GREY, commander of the Pacific Mail Company's steamer, Henry Chauncey, had the statue placed in proper position and upon a firm pedestal. Passengers hastily view the statue *en route* for Panama to take the California steamer. It gives me pleasure to do justice to one of Captain GREY's many kind, good acts.

Eiffel Tower is still the object of wonder and admiration of tourists, and in ascending one desires to get back to starting point.

In comparing notes with old American tourists, flowers came in for first appreciation, and many a horticulturist left Paris with an experience which will be of profit in coming years, and certainly encouragement to continue fruit and flower culture, willing to imitate the French in waiting for results; and here may recall the work and wide, comprehensive ideas of JAMES VICK, the elder, who first imported the best seeds from Europe, and while advertising, as the necessity of trade, placed advantages to those way

down South in Dixie and to the farther point of Oregon. I remember picking up an ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE of JAMES VICK, in British Columbia, in the hands of a squaw, who could not read, yet enjoyed immensely the pictures, and with gesture made me understand that the articles represented grew in the soil and were good to eat. To-day we poured over a late CATALOGUE, and found that art has grown, too, in America, and jogged along, side by side, with its flowers—intending to represent them, and well, too; so with flower-loving tourists we compared the progress of flower culture in America in connection with the impetus given it by JAMES VICK, and remarked that there is a tribute due him for patience, perseverance, pluck and enterprise, and all wished the firm a golden harvest.

In the going down of the sun in the main building of the Exposition, near EDISON's speaking phonograph, and near Rockwood Pottery, from Cincinnati, we recalled the untiring, patient endeavors of the first President of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, ANDREW H. ERNST, of Spring Garden Nursery, passed away, but who, less successfully than Mr. VICK, in true German fashion, generously and unselfishly did all he could to introduce the best quality of fruit and flowers in the west. Strange to say, over a bottle of LONGWORTH's wine, another of Cincinnati's benefactors, we drank the health and happiness of all horticultural enterprises, and horticulturists and florists. Would it be amiss to wish for them the faith in the quality of their produce which the peasant, here illustrated, believed to be native alone to her Onions?

ADA THORPE LOFTUS.

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HIGH-COLORED FOLIAGE.

Continued from page 355.

In the present fashion of using strongly contrasted colors in garden decoration, the strong tendency to run to extremes is well shown in the style of embellishment among the poor for their small dooryards or parterres. It has been well said that imitation is the sincerest flattery. Hence, we often see in such places a collection of pebbles and cobbles, oyster and clam shells, and such like, arranged in border edgings, ribbons and mounds on the carpet bedding style. When newly whitewashed these rival in force of color and distinctness of design any foliage bed. The imitation is sometimes very good, and who now can question the taste displayed or the fitness of the material used? Round pebbles or even shells make an admirable substitute for the fleshy vegetable rosettes we call "hen and chickens." They will border a bed or outline a figure with equal distinctness, and vary as little in form or aspect during the season. For inlaid letters in the grass they are even better adapted than the plants we see used. The inscription is clearer and easier to read, and the whitewashed stones and shells are really the most befitting material for such work. SHAKESPEARE wrote it would be folly to "gild refined gold, paint the Lily, or add a perfume to the Violet." His satire would have lost its fine point if in his day it had been as common as it is in ours, to embellish dooryards and lawns with whitewashed quartz or painted sea shells, to decorate graves with dyed immortelles, and mantle pieces with stained grasses, or add a new scent to a bouquet with drug store perfumery.

That the taste is corrupt, which approves or applauds the prevalent practice of gardeners in this line, is sufficiently shown by the obvious tendency of the fashion. The motive is not to encourage an intimate acquaintance with flowers or plants, but simply to show what brilliant or bizarre effects can be produced by ingenious combinations of strange colors. Hence the demand for novelty and intricacy increases from year to year, and the strain after effect continues till the laborious effort becomes grotesque or burlesque. The first designs in ribbons, bands, diamonds, stars, crescents, crosses, crowns, hearts, anchors and such like no longer suffice. In like manner simple figures of the geometric pattern are only of use while novel. They must gradually grow in elaborate intricacy till simple wheels and dials become a blind maze of scrolls and convolutions. Then imitations of animals begin and advance from elephants and camels to zebras, giraffes, swans, peacocks, butterflies, snakes and sea serpents. Inscriptions in the grass are also tried, giving perhaps the name of the place, the year or month, or date, the last, of course, to be changed daily, and so on with labored variations till every possible device be exhausted. The same designs give little satisfaction if simply renewed yearly, for such things once seen have lost the novelty which is their chief claim to attention. The fashion must surely soon run its course because of sheer inability to produce startling effects. If it were the plants under natural conditions that were visited, their seasonal changes might satisfy the eye. But we look at them only in bulk to follow the design, and that is always the same throughout the season. When invention flags or fails the popular surprise and admiration is drawn out by making larger beds or a greater or more elaborate assortment of them. This has led onward and downward till collections of several hundred thousand plants have been set out in some private gardens and public grounds.

The absurdity of the leading motive in carpet bedding may now be found in listening to the kind of talk we often hear from ardent enthusiasts of the practice. A shallow amateur in such work who has not before seen the highest art in this line visits some notable display on some fine private estate or large public ground, and on his return regales his gaping friends with some such description as this: "You can form no idea of the immense quantity of plants in such a garden. A ten-acre lot would be well filled if all were put together. The edgings and ribbons, if strung out on end, would reach over a mile. They were of nearly every imaginable color you can find in the stores. The ring-streaked, speckled and spotted plants, and those with all shades of bronze and gold were legion. They were set out with the most wonderful ingenuity into so many patterns that carpet bedding was no name for it. There were Turkish rugs, church windows, wheels within wheels, figures of animals, statuary, fancy penmanship and plain print, and elegant figures of all kinds in geometry, trigonometry and astronomy."

"What? Astronomy?"

"Why, certainly. The first thing that struck my eye was a bright bed of fire-red Coleus, a circular mound raised high up in the form of a half globe. That was a sunset when there is a thick haze on the horizon. Near by was a crescent in variegated Alyssum. That was the silver moon. I could not tell whether she was in the last quarter or the first; the horns pointed to the north and were equally correct for either phase. Next came a bed that seemed a combination of both the others. Two-thirds of it was filled with the darkest leaved Coleus, the other third was a crescent of variegated Stevia in bloom. This was an eclipse. I could not tell at first whether it was the sun or the moon that was eclipsed. After a little study I "got on to" the gardener's trick. It was either or both, according to your pleasure or fancy. All around were lots of little stars and one or two small disks curiously belted and girdled. Having seen pictures of the telescopic appearance of Jupiter and Saturn, I at once divined the meaning.

"There was any number of figures of men and beasts and birds and fishes. A military officer in full uniform was very imposing. A base ball player with club drawn and two prize fighters in full tilt looked dangerous. A boat race of two boats and two rowers in each pulling the oars was quite exciting. In statuary the finest design I saw was a copy of St. George killing the dragon. It was full of spirit and action. A little puff of wind now and again crossing the dragon's head made his jaws seem to open and shut quickly. The feathery stuff used for the tail of the steed actually whisked gently in the breeze.

"The brightest spot of all had a display of flags of all the leading nations. The tricolor, the union jack and even the stars and stripes were easily imitated, but some of the others tried the highest art of the gardener. In the geometry section I was for a long while puzzled by a most intricate figure, the meaning of which I could not make out. At last I detected a faint outline of an arch spanning the whole; that gave me the clew. It was the tough problem of Euclid, called the asses' bridge. I remember how it puzzled me when at school, and it is just as hard to see through it in a flower bed."

This "traveler's tale," like the plants he saw, was perhaps rather high colored, but it is in the same line with the general run of such talk. He may have followed the wrong cue at times, but he did not

stray far from the right track. A lively imagination may have seen some figures and emblems not intended by the designer. But worse things than any here described have been actually done. Butterflies have been attempted in a combination of leaves and flowers, living and dead, trained to a frame and set in high relief that they may seem merely to touch mother earth. For special gala occasions models of swans have been covered with newly detached petals of Water Lilies and set afloat on artificial ponds. Calendars, sun dials and weather vanes have been tricked out in living plants, with painstaking care to furnish daily some useful information, in no other way obtainable, about the weather, the date of the month and time of day, if the sun shines. These ridiculous conceits and all other monstrous creations of this kind are strictly in accord with the ruling motive of the simplest work in the same line. It is either folly or falsehood from beginning to end, because so at variance with the "eternal fitness of things."

The many odd and whimsical patterns into which foliage plants are woven, are in degree only, not in kind, more objectionable than the mere grouping together of large masses of strong color of every hue. Were this display confined to flowers only, it would not perhaps be so glaringly offensive as in foliage, because in flowers brightness and endless variety of color are natural. But to collect together, even in flowers, all the strongest colors we can find, and mass them into strongly contrasted bands and figures in the present bedding out style, would surely not be considered in good taste. Should we not seek for richer shades rather than glaring contrasts? for quality rather than quantity? As a lady of fashion once wittily said: "Do we measure beauty by the square yard?" Strange though it may seem, there are some persons who would prefer one sweet Violet to one acre of Coleus. But in carpet bedding it is the broadest carpets and the boldest patterns that draw the biggest crowds. To the commercial florist that is a better "trade mark" than the "government stamp." Whether it elevates or degrades the public taste seems of less consequence.

But fashion is a fickle minded queen, especially to subjects of her own sex. When a fancy notion of no intrinsic value has literally been run into the ground, as this one has been, a slight hint from the throne would quickly change the vogue. Florists, now-a-days, are like milliners in their abject dependence on the latest whim of Her Majesty. It may, therefore, be more profitable in the long run to give timely regard to the more general cultivation of such bedding plants as will attract attention by some admirable quality inherent in each individual plant, whether it be in flower, fragrance, foliage or form. To embellish a garden with such plants, however uninviting at first it may be to the ignorant, will give more real enjoyment to the true lover of flowers than to embleze it with merely so much high color cleverly arranged.

In other things a fondness for loud colors is not considered in good taste or a sign of refinement. Take dress, for instance. The phrase, "barbaric pearl and gold," is as applicable to the color as to the richness of the apparel. The fashions in dress of the Chinaman, the Arab and the Turk are not copied by civilized nations, or if imitated at all it is done only by ignorant and foolish people. Aunt Dinah may go to her work in the cotton field in a yellow skirt, blue wrap and red bandanna. Giddy girls may wear "dolly varden" calicoes, and silly dudes loud tartans, only to be laughed at by sensible peo-

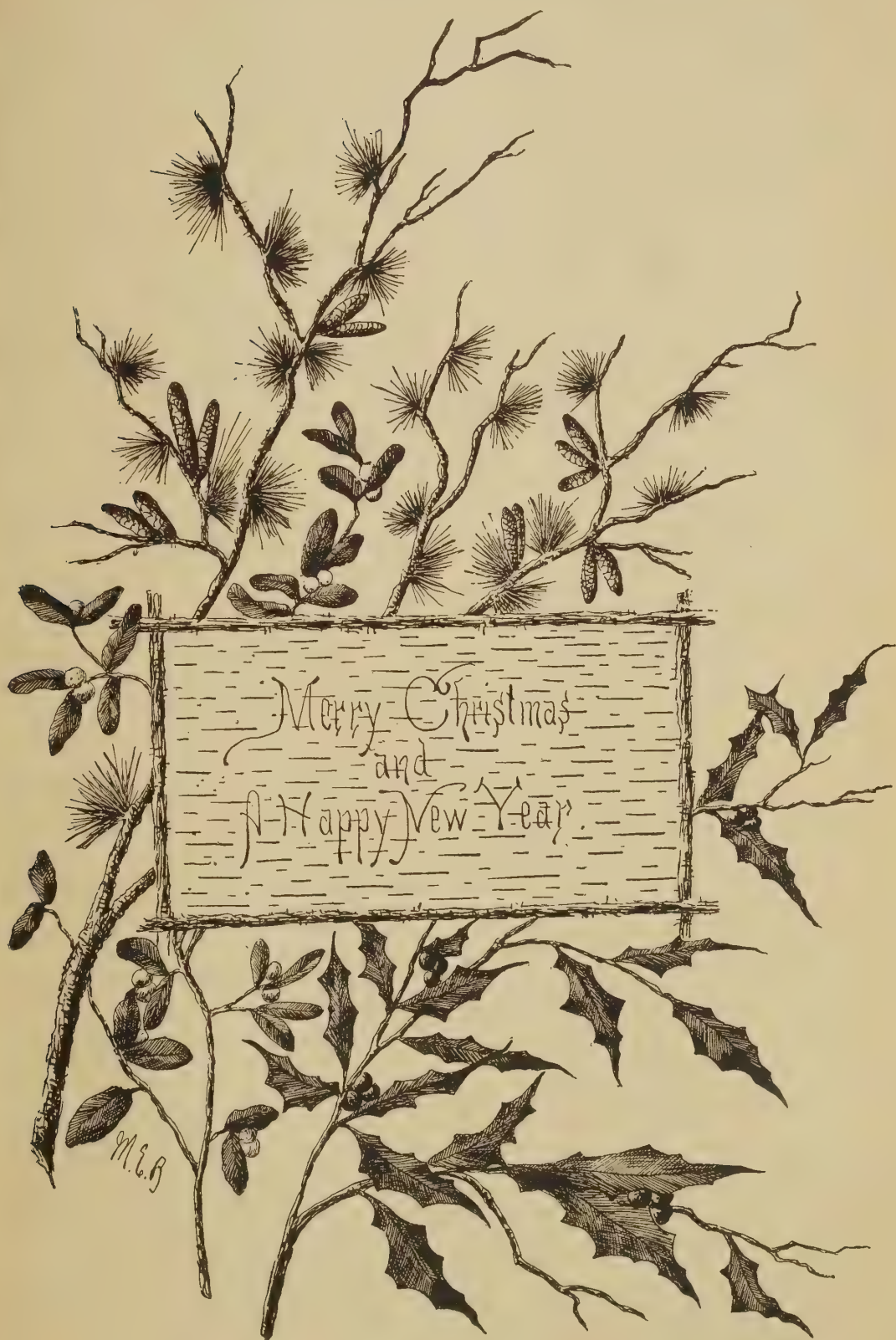
ple. The circus clown is true to his assumed character in his suit of strongly marded stripes and bars, and SHAKESPEARE'S fool quite consistently exclaims, "Motley is the only wear." When we dress up a garden after the same fashion it ought to seem equally barbaric and foolish, except to ignorant or foolish people. True refinement in either case avoids the cheap and conspicuous, and selects for the richest adornment the choicest material and the softest harmony of tints.

Some of you, perhaps, may say that "as gardens are made expressly for show and ornament, why not bedeck them with anything and everything that is bright and beautiful?" But what is the beautiful? "Aye, there's the rub." No satisfactory answer can be given to that question. It is a common saying, "there is no accounting for tastes." Beauty appeals mainly to the eye, but in some subtle way we become sensible of it through other senses. We may not touch it, but it touches us. In a double sense we judge it by taste as well as by sight. A ripe Persimmon has a brighter color than the finest Apple, but after you try to eat it the bloom on the Apple cheek will probably have to your eye the more inviting look. There are some persons who doubt if to them "a Rose by any other name would smell as sweet," or if with its delicious fragrance gone it would look as sweet. On a warm summer day, when a gentle breeze fans the foliage of the Birch and Poplar, the rhythmical patter struck up by the dancing motion of the joyous leaves, will trill sweet music in the ear, and thus reveal a new glimpse of beauty to the eye of any one lovingly familiar with these trees, and in sympathy with their merry mood at such a time. This phenomenon may not be audible or visible to other people, because however intently we may listen or look, the strain will not be heard nor the vision seen, unless our ears be attuned to the right key, and our eyes be opened to receive the light. Our sensibility to the beautiful in nature thus varies with each individual, as so much depends not only on the relative acuteness of our senses, but also on constitutional temperament, mental faculty and personal culture.

Beauty of color especially depends largely upon the light in which it is seen. For illustration, take these opposing views regarding foliage plants. To you, as florists, your exotic plants look so beautiful on the greenhouse bench among their own kith and kin, that to your eyes an illusive halo may surround them when you see them set out amid the grass and gravel and shrubbery. When you look at the landscape from the inside of your glass houses your plants are in the foreground and all else is dim, distant and diminutive, as if seen through the small end of a field glass. I, on the other hand, standing out amid the native vegetation, see only the "foreign look" of the strange foliage. Because it is "not to the manor born," I may look at it through jaundiced eyes. The point of view being so different the objects seen must have an equally different perspective.

It will be seen to you, therefore, that I have got hold of the wrong end of the telescope. This may all be. Most people see as you do, else such work would not be so popular. But here and there I have met a few whose vision seemed as strangely affected as mine. We may be color blind to the beauty without knowing it, or we look at these things by candle light while you are in the sunshine. My standpoint may be a wrong one, but I simply report these things as I see them. To both sides, perhaps, the aphorism may be applicable: "things are not what they seem."

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.



BLANCHE'S DILEMMA SOLVED.

"Blanche Brewster, give us a hint, this minute, as to what you would like for Christmas gifts. No one seems able to decide what you would care for. Tell us what you have in mind."

"Nothing at all, Auntie. I can't think of anything I want, except such as I always get anyway, to wear and to use. I've been hoping that some of you would think up something that would be a happy surprise. I don't think it's one bit nice to expect me to make suggestions." With which remark Blanche assumed a much-abused expression of tone and face.

"See here, brother," said Auntie to Mr. Brewster, as that gentleman entered the room, "this daughter of yours (and my beloved name-sake), can't suggest anything she'd care for as Christmas gifts. She is already so surfeited with holiday and birthday presents that she can think of nothing she wants."

"The pampered child!" said papa. "We'll have to cut her short for a while." But secretly he was proud that a daughter of his had nothing left to wish for, and gave it no further thought.

But not so with Miss Brewster. Here was a girl sated with luxuries at fifteen. Was she contented and happy? No; she was restless and seemingly dissatisfied.

She would try once more to arouse the mother to a sense of the wrong being done to the girl's best interest. She herself had stood as sponsor for the child at the baptismal font, and had there made promises on her behalf which she must now look after conscientiously. Prolonged absence from her had developed mischief that she had not suspected.

"What is to be done with her?" queried the mother, now a little anxious for the first time. "If she can't be amiable and happy with all that has been done for her she's an ungrateful child."

"Not naturally so, I'm sure," replied the Auntie. "The trouble seems to be that she has not learned to interest herself in anything or anybody outside of her own personal pleasure. We must bring her out of self. I believe I'd like to take her with me to the Benevolent Relief Rooms this afternoon."

"Very well, anything you think best.

I shall be too busy until after the holidays to give her any special attention."

Alas, for the daughter whose mother is too busy with the claims of society to attend to the formation of her character; and alas, for the mother. We'll hope there are very few such, and none at all among the mothers whose children read these pages.

Now, while Blanche and her Auntie are on their way to the Relief Rooms, we'll take note of what is going on in another home not far away.

"If you'll prop me up in bed, Katie, dear, I think that now I can work that last button-hole without fainting again. Then you can take the half dozen vests back to the shop and get the pay for them."

"Then can we have some 'tatoes for supper?" asks hungry-eyed Georgie.

"Yes, indeed; we'll all eat as much as we want. But you must remember to get a loaf to replace the one we borrowed of poor Mrs. Sturgess. We must not owe *her* anything."

But, mamma," says Katie, "I'm afraid for you to raise up again. It frightens us nearly to death for you to faint. You look as if you were dying."

"I know, dear. It seems cruel to add that to what else you have to bear. But I'll not sit up so straight this time. You may thread my needle and sit near me, and if I motion to you, just let me down quickly with my head as low as possible, then I shall not faint. When we've had our supper of nice, hot potatoes I shall be stronger, for I have no pain now and no more fever. So, you see, I'm almost well," and the pallid woman tries to smile encouragingly.

Then a flashing thought seizes Katie, and clasping her hands in distress, she cries out:

"O, mamma, mama! I believe you are starving! Oh, my; oh, my! what shall we do? Georgie, our mamma is starving—just think—*starving*! Go down on the street—run; tell everybody, quick; so some one will help us!"

"Katie, Katie! you make me worse," and the feeble woman grasps the girl by one arm, as with closed eyes she whispers:

"Be quiet, both of you, if you want me to get stronger. People don't starve who are getting money for work. You know the last I received had to go for coal. If I had kept well we shouldn't have got so short of food. You'll get a dollar and twenty cents for this work. Be very careful to not lose it. But, Katie, this corner is so dark, this cloudy day, that it strains my eyes to set the stitches on this black goods. Light the lamp and bring it here. I fear you'll have to hold it, dear. What a good thing the kerosene holds out. I've prayed to the Lord so much that I'm sure He's going to help us. But I want Him to do it in His own way, Katie. You must never think of sending your brother on the street with such a message as that you gave him just now. How dreadful it would have sounded. And see, your brother is sobbing yet. My dear, dear children, the Lord is good, and He will provide until we can help ourselves. I'm sure of it. He never forsakes those who put their trust in Him."

The tremulous hand now pauses in its weary transit to and fro; the eyes close and head falls back for a moment's rest, while the lips murmur, "Yes, I trust, trust, Father, in Thee."

Katie sets down the lamp, and getting a drink of water, puts it to her mother's lips.

"Let me finish the button-hole, mamma," she says, "I've been watching how you take the stitches; I'm sure I can do it."

"No, dear; it's almost done now. Hold the light near. How good its warmth feels on my face. Before you go out put more coal in the stove and put on the potato water to be heating. Then wrap my woolen shawl about your head and shoulders, and your nubia over Georgie's ears and around his neck. Don't buy anything to-day but one peck of potatoes. Georgie can help you fetch them in the basket that you take the bundle in. O, how good they will taste—mealy and smoking hot. How nice that we've plenty of salt to eat with them. There, dear, this is done now. Let me down, quick."

The purple lips and deathly pallor show that none too soon has the prostrate position been resumed.

As the children pass out to do their

errand, they kiss their mother good-bye, as she whispers, "Don't forget the bread for Mrs. Sturgess." Hurrying down three flights of stairs to the street, they hasten onward with such speed as hunger lends to youthful feet—such hunger, too, as only growing children with keen appetites can know.

"Can't we buy something that's cooked, so's we can taste a little right away?" asks Georgie, as his eyes devour the rolls and buns in the show windows as they pass by.

"O, no; cooked things cost too much. But see, we'll soon be there now."

"O, goody; but what's that black thing swinging on the door knob for?"

Katie does not speak. Her eyes are fixed on the black crape and closed shutters, while her heart sinks within her that no one can be there now to receive her package and pay the money that was to keep her mother from starvation. She sinks down on the steps, whispering:

"We can't get the money to-day. Somebody belonging to Mr. Jacobs is dead."

At this, Georgie's pent-up feelings defy repression, and he cries as a five year old boy can cry when he feels that he has a just grievance.

Some of the passers-by tell him to "shut up;" others inquire the trouble, and say: "Pshaw, is that all? You can get your money to-morrow."

Then a big ragamuffin stops to question: "What was yer goin' to buy with the money when yer got it?" he asks. Katie is afraid of him, and does not answer.

"'Tatoes," says Georgie. The ragamuffin has so often been hungry himself that he suspects the real trouble. So he says: "Ef yer jis hungry—if that's all—why, dry bread or corn-cake, or anything'll do till to-morrer."

"We aint got none at all," says Georgie.

"By hokey," says the ragamuffin; "does your daddy drink?"

"Aint got any."

"Nor mother neither?"

"Yes, but she's sick, and can't sew no more."

"She's *starving!*" exclaims Katie in desperation, as she springs to her feet. "O, what will I do! what will I do!"

"See here," says the ragamuffin, "I'm half starved myself, but I kin git some-

thin', somehow, and you ninnies can't. Where d'ye live, anyway?"

Katie is too afraid of him to speak, but Georgie tells as well as he can, while Katie hurries him off, scarcely knowing whether she is dead or alive, so dazed is the young head with trouble, and so numb are fingers and feet with the cold.

Georgie cries at every step, except as he pauses a moment at some baker's window display. Poor Katie drags him away and pulls him along, while her silent tears almost freeze on her face.

When finally they reach the stairs, Georgie presses on ahead and bursts into uncontrollable crying as he reaches his mother's bedside.

"What is 'it, my child? What is it?" she asks. "Wouldn't they pay you? did you lose the money?"

"No," he sobs out, "some mean old thing had to go and die, and Mr. Jacobs had went to the fun'yal."

"Why, Georgie, *don't* speak like that; somebody is in great trouble," moans the sick woman. Then Katie clasps her in silent tears till the mother says, "You are nearly frozen, dear; go, both of you, and drink a cup each of that hot water—as hot as you can swallow it. It will warm you all over. And be very quiet, please; I want to think what we had better do."

Then, with closed eyes, she murmurs: "Dear Lord, Thou knowest that I trusted; Thou wilt not fail me, for I trusted fully." Then, hearing the splashing in the tin water pail that had arrested her attention when alone, she wonders if the rodent has been sent to ward off starvation.

"The Chinese eat them," she thinks, "why not we?" But this idea is too repugnant. She will wait a little. Soon a sense of peace and present help possesses her. As the children draw near she motions to each—"Be quiet, dears, I feel the Lord's assuring presence right here with us." The words awe them into silence. So still they are they can almost hear their hearts beat.

Soon they hear light footsteps pausing at their door, and Mrs. Sturgess, saying, "Yes, the sick woman lives in there, Miss." Instantly the mother says, "I knew God would hear me, children." Then a dainty tap at the door is answered by Katie, and a pleasant faced girl, in

rich attire, looks within, while Georgie springs forward, and catching her by the hand, exclaims, "Didn't you bring us some 'tatoes? the water's hot, all ready for 'em."

"*Georgie!*" calls the sick woman. But he is held fast by the girl's hand the while she calls down stairs, "Yes, Auntie, this is the place,"

One whole minute's talk and observation is enough to send Blanche Brewster to the window to hide her tears. But soon her Aunt hastens her away that they may relieve with dispatch the present necessities of the needy family. On leaving the room, Miss Brewster asks Georgie what they shall bring him.

"'Tatoes," he answers.

"Yes, you shall have those, but what else do you want?"

"Whole lot o' 'tatoes,"

"But its nearly Christmas," says Blanche; "what do you want for Christmas presents?"

"'Jess only 'tatoes."

"He can tell better when he's not so hangry," says her Auntie with quivering lip as they hasten down the stairs. "It seems that the street arab at the Relief Rooms told us truly after all. I wonder if that Katie can tell what she'd like for Christmas gifts. She certainly can't have the same difficulty that a girl had with whom I talked this morning."

"O, Auntie, don't. I know what you mean. I can tell now, fast enough, what I want."

"Well."

"I want everything that's suitable to give to this family. I want to give them myself."

"Well, then, deliver your orders now to the driver."

This having been done they are driven swiftly to the nearest provision store, where Blanche begs her Aunt to go in with her and make selections. The purchases are then dispatched with speed, followed by the brougham. Ragamuffin is there before them.

"Did yer find a starvin' woman?" he asks. Miss Brewster nodded assent.

"I knowed yer would. No sich pica-ninnies as them kin fool me." Then, seeing the cans that were being carried up stairs, he said, "Don't you want me to jerk open some o' them? 'taint easy work for a lady."

Miss Brewster looks at him searchingly; "You may open a soup can immediately—that needs only to be warmed. Then open a can of tongue and we'll have sandwiches for you and those children as soon as possible."

A falling tear upon his hand while at work confirms a forming idea in Miss Brewster's mind to look after his future. Something may yet be made of him, she thinks—who knows?

Blanche, busy and excited, splits buns and spreads them, while Ragamuffin sits at the top of the stairs awaiting his turn. "These rich people aint so all-fired proud and stuck up as I thought they was," he says to himself, "they're tarnation nice when ye come to know 'em."

Poor Ragamuffin, how many, like yourself, will be warmed and fed the coming holidays, and thereby led into a better life? May God give wisdom to the liberal minded to find out and help such as may yet be saved.

May many a young girl's heart—yes, and many a boy's too, be found seeking to help and make happy those who are less favored than themselves. Every one can do something, if it be only a kindly deed, or expression of good will.

There is now no one more thoughtful for others than is Blanche Brewster, and no one more happy. She has learned *for herself* that to study the happiness of others is to secure her own.

MARIA BARRETT BUTLER.

MOTHER'S ROOM.

'Tis the cheeriest room in the household,
With window-seat battered and bruised;
Where the carpets, the chairs and the table
Are never too good to be used.

Here little ones come with their sorrows,
Or bubble with laughter and noise;
Bring sweetest caresses and kisses,
And scatter their books and their toys.

There's an unceasing patter of small feet,
An opening and shutting of doors;
And the room that was swept and garnished
Is covered with spoils and stores.

In the dawn of a summer morning
There's a scampering down the stairs,
And every one knows they are coming,
They whisper so loud their affairs.

And when the day's lesson is over,
They come, with their chatter and song,
To the sunniest room, where dear mother
And all that is lovely belong.

If the thread of their lives get tangled,
She quietly straightens them out,
And gathers them, sweetly united,
Her little low rocker about.

Dear mother, o'er all presiding,
O, honored and beautiful queen,
You gather your loving subjects
With a grace that is rarely seen.

Then who, to keep spotless and tidy
The carpets and windows and doors,
Would lose the sweet laughter of childhood,
And love from such beautiful stores?

MRS. M. J. SMITH.

VICK'S MAGAZINE FOR 1890.

This number completes the twelfth volume of this MAGAZINE. We trust that as many of our friends as can, that have not already notified us to this effect, will send in their names and act as agents in their own neighborhoods to obtain subscribers for the next volume. A page in the Publisher's Department, and notices in these columns in previous numbers, have explained in regard to the Illustrated Poem, "Myself," which we have prepared for each subscriber. By writing to us for terms of agency, full particulars can be learned. We want an active agent at every Post Office, and the inducements offered are such that many would gladly avail themselves of this opportunity for profitable work if they un-

derstood it. Those who are willing to canvass should send in their names as early as possible, and state what territory they wish to operate in, and learn all our terms and inducements. Write at once.

BINDING THE MAGAZINE.

We will bind the MAGAZINE in nice cloth covers, for any subscriber, for 50 cents, and return the book, with the postage or expressage prepaid by us. If subscribers will send us the eleven numbers in season, we will add the December number and have the volume bound and returned, if possible, before the Christmas holidays. Please give your name on the package when sent, so that we may know to whom it belongs.

